



Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

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Within every woman there is a wild and natural creature, a powerful force, filled with good instincts, passionate creativity, and ageless knowing. Her name is Wild Woman, but she is an endangered species. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D., Jungian analyst and cantadora storyteller shows how women's vitality can be restored through what she calls "psychic archeological digs" into the ruins of the female unconscious. Using multicultural myths, fairy tales, folk tales, and stories, Dr. Estes helps women reconnect with the healthy, instinctual, visionary attributes of the Wild Woman archetype.

Dr. Estes has created a new lexicon for describing the female psyche. Fertile and life-giving, it is a psychology of women in the truest sense, a knowing of the soul.

Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype Details

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?Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✨*♥? says

Evocative and exhilarating! I need to reread this. Many, many times.

Q:

... a scar is stronger than skin... (c)

Q:

The body is a multilingual being. (c)

Q:

Even if one has friends, those friends may not be suns. (c)

Q:

When a life is too controlled, there becomes less and less life to control. (c)

Q:

Nothing makes the light, the wonder, the treasure stand out so well as darkness. (c)

Q:

Talismans are reminders of what is felt but not seen, what is so, but not immediately obvious. (c)

Q:

Stories are medicine. (c)

Q:

Though fairy tales end after ten pages, our lives do not. We are multi-volume sets. (c)

Q:

Stories set the inner life into motion, and this is particularly important where the inner life is frightened, wedged, or cornered. Story greases the hoists and pulleys, it causes adrenaline to surge, shows us the way out, down, or up, and for our trouble, cuts for us fine wide doors in previously blank walls, openings that lead to the dreamland, that lead to love and learning, that lead us back to our own real lives as knowing wildish women. (c)

Q:

Dogs are the magicians of the universe. (c)

Q:

There is nothing wrong with ducks, I assure them, or with swans. But ducks are ducks and swans are swans. (c)

Q:

I like to use mice. What if you were raised by the mice people? (c)

Q:

Wild Woman comes back. Through night dreams, through events half understood and half remembered. ... To take the world into one's arms and act towards it in a soul-filled and soul-strengthening manner is a powerful act of wildish spirit. (?)

Q:

We are all filled with a longing for the wild. There are few culturally sanctioned antidotes for this yearning. We were taught to feel shame for such a desire. We grew our hair long and used it to hide our feelings. But the shadow of Wild Woman still lurks behind us during our days and in our nights. No matter where we are, the shadow that trots behind us is definitely four-footed. (c)

Q:

Don't waste your time hating a failure. Failure is a greater teacher than success. Listen, learn, go on. (c)

Q:

Every creature on earth returns to home. It is ironic that we have made wildlife refuges for ibis, pelican, egret, wolf, crane, deer, mouse, moose, and bear, but not for ourselves in the places we live day after day. We understand that the loss of habitat is the most disastrous event that can occur to a free creature. (c)

Q:

I hope you will go out and let stories, that is life, happen to you, and that you will work with these stories... water them with your blood and tears and your laughter till they bloom, till you yourself burst into bloom. (c)

Q:

Be wild; that is how to clear the river. The river does not flow in polluted, we manage that. The river does not dry up, we block it. If we want to allow it its freedom, we have to allow our ideational lives to be let loose, to stream, letting anything come, initially censoring nothing. That is creative life. It is made up of divine paradox. To create one must be willing to be stone stupid, to sit upon a throne on top of a jackass and spill rubies from one's mouth. Then the river will flow, then we can stand in the stream of it raining down.

(c)

Q:

The doors to the world of the wild Self are few but precious. If you have a deep scar, that is a door, if you have an old, old story, that is a door. If you love the sky and the water so much you almost cannot bear it, that is a door. If you yearn for a deeper life, a full life, a sane life, that is a door. (?)

Q:

A woman may crave to be near water, or be belly down, her face in the earth, smelling the wild smell. She might have to drive into the wind. She may have to plant something, pull things out of the ground or put them into the ground. She may have to knead and bake, rapt in dough up to her elbows.

She may have to trek into the hills, leaping from rock to rock trying out her voice against the mountain. She may need hours of starry nights where the stars are like face powder spilt on a black marble floor. She may feel she will die if she doesn't dance naked in a thunderstorm, sit in perfect silence, return home ink-stained, paint-stained, tear-stained, moon-stained. (c)

Q:

Practice listening to your intuition, your inner voice; ask questions; be curious; see what you see; hear what you hear; and then act upon what you know to be true. These intuitive powers were given to your soul at birth.

(c)

Q:

It is good to have many personae, to make collections, sew up several, collect them as we go along in life. As we become older, with such a collection at our behest, we find we can portray any aspect of self most anytime we wish. However, at some point, most particularly as one grows into past mid-life and on into old age, one's personas shift and meld in mysterious ways. Eventually, there is a kind of 'meltdown', a loss of personae complete, thereby revealing what would, in its greatest light, be called 'the true self'. (c)

Q:

Go out in the woods, go out. If you don't go out in the woods nothing will ever happen and your life will never begin. (c)

Q:

When the personal soul life is burnt to ashes, a woman loses the vital treasure ... In her unconscious, the desire for the red shoes, a wild joy, not only continues, it swells and floods ... (c)

Q:

You are born to one mother, but if you are lucky, you will have more than one. And among them all you will find most of what you need. (c)

Q:

I was an aesthete rather than an athlete, and my only wish was to be an ecstatic wanderer. (c)

Q:

I've not forgotten the song of those dark years, hambre del alma, the song of the starved soul. But neither

have I forgotten the joyous canto hondo, the deep song, the words of which come back to us when we do the work of soulful reclamation. (c)

Q:

Healthy wolves and healthy women share certain psychic characteristics: keen sensing, playful spirit, and a heightened capacity for devotion. Wolves and women are relational by nature, inquiring, possessed of great endurance and strength. They are deeply intuitive, intensely concerned with their young, their mates, and their pack. They are experienced in adapting to constantly changing circumstances; they are fiercely stalwart and very brave. (c)

missy jean says

Jungian psychoanalytic theory applied to folktales and fairy tales from around the world. Yes? Yes.

I want to carry copies of this book around and hand them out, proselytorily, to everyone woman I encounter who feels confined, constrained, and soul-sick. This book has helped me to reconnect with my intuition, reevaluate what it means for me to live authentically, and reimagine what my life can look like when I live it wildly and freely. It really has been a gift to me.

There is lots of gender essentialism in here, but for some reason I don't care. A friend and I were talking about this the other, trying to figure out why Estes gets away with saying essentializing and even heteronormative things that we would never swallow from another writer... we thought it might have to do with her practice of putting essentialisms in the context of universal archetypes that we can accept or reject as we choose. Whatever it is, I can't say anything about this book other than that I love it.

Bea Zee says

Yeah yeah, the book may be seen as a cry of independence for all women out there who need to get in touch with their "wild" side.

However, my reservations:

- The author tried to say that women should be who they are, but continually portrayed one single type of women: women who had artistic urges, thick thighs and who had always felt like they were born from the wrong parents.

So, if you are a skinny archivist who had a decent childhood and no artistic talents, there's something terribly wrong with your psyche.

- The author makes assertions and that is all. No evidence whatsoever is given to any of the sentences in any of the 500 pages this book has to offer. It's all "All women are like this. She may think she is not, but it's only because it's hidden in her subconscious or she needs psychoanalysis".

- I really mean it, the assertions-with-no-evidence just permeates the whole book. Even the analyses of the stories, "the skull means her instinct" kind of thing. Why? Why can't the skull mean her fears, her past, or just simply a literal skull? I can give different plausible interpretations to all of her stories and dreams.

- Highly repetitive. You could read the book just by reading the first sentence of each paragraph, because they all had circular logic/unnecessary illustration: "women are like wolves. wolves are wild and women are wild so women are like wolves".

- I question all comparisons with animals. Can I compare myself to a scorpion and say that I should kill myself when facing an attack from which I can't escape? Of course women share some characteristics with animals, but not all.

Disappointing.

(This book is highly recommended in pagan circles, because it tries to elevate the status of women. And in goddess-centered religions, that should be nice, right? But..

I can read a book about religion and just accept its assertions, because that's the nature of religion. But I can't read a book about psychoanalysis and just accept it. And I think that instead of elevating the status of anything, it lowers it. A poorly written book accepted and revered by a whole community makes you question the judgement of that community. So I think it's the responsibility of the members of that community who think this way to stand for what they believe in.)

Lamski Kikita says

Let me just start with saying that there are two kinds of people who would NOT like this book: 1- chauvanistic men/pigs(hehe), and 2- women who are uptight with their religious and social beliefs (and the stepford housewives type).

This book is for all women, who struggled through life because of the pressures and pre-tailored expectations of their families, societies, religious leaders, husbands, children, etc, and finally saw the light of the moon and could not fight the urge to howl (owwwwwwwwwwwwwww).

This book contains fairy tales and folklore stories which we were told as children, but never thought about as a tool for empowering women or entering their psyche. I did not give it five stars because the parts after each story in which the author explains the folkloric symbols, the archetypes, and the psychological implications, sometimes were too unnecessarily elaborate. In general, nevertheless, it is a very empowering book.

The basic concept is that everything that goes wrong in women's lives in the modern world is that they have forgotten their wild nature, that place inside their mind which still leads with an animal instinct that makes women strong and with much power. The Wild Woman is between bars inside each one of us, howling and scratching her way out, demanding that she has time to create art, to heal, to protect her territory, to guide, to give life, to mourn, to make love, to laugh scandalously with no shame, to live with no boundaries, to teach, to carry wisdom, and to trust her intuition and instincts.

As a child, hearing the traditional fairy tales and reading Russian children's books, I remember never caring for the handsome king, or the beautiful maiden, or the innocent mother; I was always obsessed with the evil characters: the wolf, the vampire, the witch (especially Baba Yaga), and the devil. I remember thinking of how strong they are, how wise, and how cunningly smart, and wanting to be like them, and not like the weak princess who's waiting in her stupid castle for some idiotic rich man with an ugly haircut to come and do all the work. After reading this book I realized that even as a child, my wild nature was healthy and active, and I

did base so many decisions in my life as a kid and now as an adult on it...i sniff and see if something smells fishy, and i listen for the crack of broken twigs. I have to say though, that i still sometimes forget my canines and my claws, and start to drift into the appropriateness of the mainstream, but now I know how to always pounce right back into my furry, four-legged state with all its glory and pride. And i am thankful that I have a man who would not be surprised if i peed around a tree to mark it mine!! (just a figure of speech, don't get any ideas, mia :-P)

Ladies, go find your inner animal and live free... following but the laws of the wild...

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Phoebe says

Here's the deal on this book.

1) It is all too easy to make fun or roll one's eyes or be actually pretty nasty about it, because it's obviously got a ridiculously embarrassing title. I personally got the book as a cheerful joke from my dad one Christmas, and I thought to myself, "gag me!"

2) But: Once I read it, I realized how smart this book is. (Eg, I learned the ever-useful term piloerection here.) What this book is is a master-key to the pictorial language that our right brain "speaks," (via dreams, myths, stories & films), particularly when we are in trouble. If you are a writer, an artist, a scholar of poetry, fiction, or ancient oral traditions that don't make "sense," or even just someone who has gone through or is going through a hard time, you can use this book; you can "work" this book. It's a guidebook to the picture language and the narrative logic of our right brain and even if you think the author is a little full of herself, which I personally do, it doesn't matter. The subject is fascinating.

3) So: By all means, ignore the parts that turn you off or feel cheesy. But give your critical eye rolling side a break, remember what it was like to be a kid who adored Andrew Lang and C.S. Lewis, and dare to realize that this book has a highly pragmatic, powerful core that can change the quality of your life.

For more along these lines, try also the books of Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade or Erich Neumann.

Lauren (Shakespeare & Whisky) says

“I hope you will go out and let stories, that is life, happen to you, and that you will work with these stories... water them with your blood and tears and your laughter till they bloom, till you yourself burst into bloom.”

Three times in my life this book found its way into my greedy little hands at a time when I needed it most.

Every woman should own a copy of this book.

Women Who Run With the Wolves is a collection of short stories/ fairytales interspersed with commentary by the author. It sounds weird, perhaps a little too academic, maybe even a bit of a literary wank.

It isn't. This book is the best "self help" book I have ever read. It takes really painful experiences, swallows them, then regurgitates them into metaphors and stories my heart could hear and respond to.

It's hard to talk about this book without getting into really personal details about why it means so much to me. I'll use an example I'm comfortable sharing. When I was in rehab for drug addiction I struggled terribly. I was isolated, I hated having every aspect of my life controlled by staff, and worst of all I wasn't sure I would succeed- when I thought about never using again I was filled with a yawning horror.

This was the second time **Running with Wolves** found me in need of nourishment. I had been in rehab for a month or two when someone dropped in my lap and said they thought I might like it. I can't begin to describe how soothing it was.

The stories in *Leg traps, Cages, and Poisoned Bait* such as the girl with the red shoes taught me how to accept who I was and what I would become if I kept chasing relief in all the wrong places. It dealt with addiction in a way that allowed me to sidle up to it and get used to the idea before facing it head on.

The Handless Maiden and *The Girl with Golden Hair* helped me acknowledge and honour the pain that had crippled me originally and led to my addiction.

Sealskin/ Soulskin and *La Llorona* helped me to find myself again.

I have been clean and sober for six years. It would be an exaggeration to say this book is the reason why, but it did help enormously.

This isn't a book to be deliberately read. It is a book that you stumble across, a book that a friend lends to you in a time of need. It's a book my hand brushes against when I'm reaching for another. I pull it out, flick through the pages and decide it is time to read it again.

I'm not a religious person, I don't believe in god. But when I read this book I feel spiritually connected to the world. I feel some inkling of the wonder and awe others feel when they commune with their god.

If you haven't read this book yet, put on your shelf. You might stumble across it again when you most need it.

Huda Yahya says

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lspRhX...>

Laila says

Her "insan?n" okumas? gerekti?ini dü?ündü?üm kitap. ?nsan dedim zira köklerinin, ruhunun derinli?inin fark?nda olmay?p günlük hayat?n yeknesakl?nd? özünü unutma e?i?ine gelenler için rehber niteli?inde. Kad?nlardan bahsediyor belki ama içindeki öykülerde insanl??a dair yerinde tespitler var. Yar?n?n yeti?kinlerini yeti?tiren kad?na dü?en ödevleri, ve kad?nlar? anlamak isteyenleri içine çekecek bir girdap

Metafor kat?lmad??m yerler az da olsa var. Fakat geneli, öyküler çok keyifliydi. Kurtlarla özde?le?tirilmek kimin ho?una gitmez ki?

Yazar?n kendine has bir anlat?m üslubu var. Al???nca daha h?zl? ilerlenebiliyor. Simgeselli?in çok fazla olmas?, okuyaca??n?z hikayeye yazar?n yorumunu okurken fark edecekleriniz sa??rt?c? olabilir.

Baz? yerlerde t?kand??m? hissetsem de belirli bir zaman geçtikten sonra yeniden okumak niyetindeyim. ?kinci okumamda farkl? yerlerin dikkatimi çekece?ine eminim.

?arap gibi bir kitap velhas?l, okudukça yeni ufuklara yelken açabilece?iniz

..

Chelsey says

Another reviewer summed it up: this book's cover was misleading! I know that authors often have nothing to do with how their books are advertised, and perhaps I should have read the introduction before I bought it or something, but it *still* isn't fair that I wasted my money on a book chock-full of Jungian psychoanalysis when what is advertised and what I expected was a book about the literary and mythological archetype of the wild woman. What's worse, the book isn't so much about Jungian psychology in general as it is about the author's experience. I just get the feeling that this book was clearly written for the author, other woman just happen to become "empowered" by her writings on wild women. And honestly, I understand wanting to reclaim wildness and all, but making essentialist claims about all women-- even if they aren't "negative" (or turning a negative into a positive)-- is still annoying. I just wanted to scold, "No, not all women are 'robust'." And so is comparing women to (non-human) animals. These assertions and comparisons may be an attempt to reclaim or subvert sexist tenets about women, but Estes seems to forget that women have been compared to and thus treated like animals throughout history, and that this has negative consequences! I understand what she's attempting to do, I know she isn't ignorant of these facts, and I can appreciate the worth and need of a focus on women's psychology, but this just doesn't work for me.

One thing I can laugh at is the fact that I would have adored this book during high school, when I was really into Jung, Freud, psychology and feminism in general and I suppose I could finish reading it out of embarrassed nostalgia. But who reads a 500+ page book out of pure nostalgia? Not I.

kate says

I have read this book a few times. I pick it up from time to time to look over a chapter of this or that - it affected the way I think about other fables and even the movies. I am half convinced that the end of the Wedding Crashers is really about two healthy psyches driving away together into the future, married to themselves. I was rereading this book about the same time I saw that movie.

Any woman who is interested in empowering herself will be inspired. It is a jungian read on the darkest version of popular folk tales and fairy tales. for me, that made it very accessible.

Some chapters resonated deeply, others not so much - I think it would be different for each individual reader.

This is not the easiest book to get into or read, but someone recommended I skip the first three chapters. Once I tried that, I dived right into the book and, reading some chapters, every page turned revealed some piece of knowledge I had been trying to grasp on my own.

I read this book at a time of great searching within myself for answers, and if you are at that kind of a point in your life, I would recommend it.

Ariel says

New podcast episode reviewing this book! Check it out! <http://arielbissett.com/booksunbound>

Lilith says

This book saved my life. I was seriously struggling with an enormous amount of class-related stress, centered around a completely unsuspected attack on my creative potential. After a few months of being shredded mentally and creatively by the people I'd expected to lean on for support and physically by the demands of moving to a new country, I was at a horrible place, alternating between periods of blind rage and near suicidal depression, and for the first time in my life I was watching my ability to create dim and all but vanish. I had two weeks to pull together a film shoot with a script that I needed to edit and then direct, I knew no one, I had no idea what I was doing and felt like I was running into a brick wall with everyone but one of my tutors, a woman who I've subsequently given a copy of WWRWW (she loves it).

This book brought me through that time. My level of self-awareness as both a woman and a product of my culture has reached a new peak, and through Estés' writing I have made one of the most difficult and empowering decisions of my life. This is a book for anyone who has ever asked why, and then shushed themselves. This book is a loud, shameless 'prayer for the wild at heart still kept in cages' (thank you Tennessee Williams), and as it boldly refutes the constraints imposed upon a wild nature by propriety, society, and that nature itself it cannot help but resemble a tall glass of water in the middle of the desert. Buy this book. Read it. If it offends with cliché, force yourself to ignore it and take in the message anyway.

Mary Richert Hendrie says

Every feminist/spiritual/literature/writing related teacher I've ever had has told me I should read this book, so I finally did. Frankly, it was annoying. The ideas are wonderful, but the writing is obnoxious. I didn't know what the phrase "purple prose" really meant until I read this book. She also refers to the "Rio abajo rio" frequently, and EVERY SINGLE TIME, she writes: "The rio abajo rio, the river below the rive ..." It's just not necessary. After reading 200 pages of this I wondered how much shorter the book would've been if she'd cut out even half the unnecessary adjectives and repeated translations. I'm sorry. Maybe this makes me a shitty feminist, but this book is really annoying. I gave it 3 stars because I still think some of the ideas in it are really good, and maybe one day I'll try reading it again when I've developed greater patience.

Laura says

When I worked at Ballantine Books in the early to mid-1990s, this was by far the most successful book the house had ever published (it probably still is). I couldn't get over it -- this piece of shit was a runaway best-seller? Overblown, overwritten, self-important, pseudo-intellectual -- what the hell was to like? And to top it off, the author acted like a complete asshole, with personality traits that matched her book to a T. Her visits to the office were ludicrous; she used to prance around, puffed up like a little marshmallow, waiting for everyone to fall at her feet.

Shockingly, Clarissa (upon whom some of us bestowed a nickname that was, um, less than flattering, and which you can probably figure out) never wrote another book that got the slightest amount of attention (unless you count *The Gift of Story*, a little nothing of a book that she tossed out in a couple of weeks just in time for the Christmas rush. [Yep, nothing cynical about Dr. Estes.] I won't even tell you the advance they gave her for it because it will make you lose your will to live.) Can't imagine why.

I mean, let's face it: you know a book is a must to avoid when you have Alice Walker saying stuff like, "*Women Who Run With the Wolves* isn't just another book. It is a gift of profound insight, wisdom, and love. An oracle from one who knows." Yeek.
